



**Office of the Attorney General  
Paul G. Summers**

**Department of State  
Secretary of State Riley C. Darnell**

**NEWS RELEASE**

Office of the Attorney General  
425 Fifth Ave North Nashville, TN 37243

Department of State  
Division of Charitable Solicitations  
312 Eighth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37243

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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CONTACT:  
Sharon Curtis-Flair  
(615) 741-5860  
Barbara Toms  
(615)-741-2555

**STATE WARNS OF POTENTIAL DISASTER AID CONTRIBUTIONS FRAUD**

Tennessee Attorney General Paul G. Summers and Secretary of State Riley C. Darnell are warning consumers to be cautious when it comes to financially assisting victims of the Sept. 11 disaster. Although there are many legitimate organizations working hard to help victims and their families in the tragedy, state officials urge Tennesseans to use discretion when making donations.

"We are proud of the way Tennesseans are stepping up to volunteer their time and money to help in any way they can, but I urge Tennesseans to be extra careful when making contributions," Attorney General Summers said. "We will do our part by taking swift action against anyone who attempts to fraudulently take advantage of our citizens under these tragic circumstances."

"Two days ago," stated Secretary of State Riley C. Darnell, "the citizens of Tennessee and the entire nation witnessed the unimaginable---acts of terrorism that destroyed lives, property, and our sense of tranquility. Today we face the unthinkable---persons who will prey upon Tennesseans for their own personal gain."

Secretary Darnell added that charity solicitations are often made in the wake of disasters. “Our citizens have a long and proud history of giving of their time, money and services to those in need, so I’m confident they will respond in this situation.”

Secretary Darnell urged, however, that Tennesseans keep the following tips in mind when responding to appeals to help the firefighters, police officers, families and communities affected by this tragedy:

- \*Be wary of appeals that are long on emotion but short on what the charity will do to address the specific disaster;

- \*Know the organization that is requesting a contribution. Take time to verify that the organization is registered with the Secretary of State by calling (615) 741-2555 or checking its web-site at [www.state.tn.us/sos/charity](http://www.state.tn.us/sos/charity).

- \*Ask how much of your gift will be used for the disaster mentioned in the appeal, and how much will go towards administrative and fund-raising costs. Find out what the charity intends to do with any excess contributions remaining after the victims' needs are met;

- \*Never give cash. . . and don't give your credit card number! Write a check payable only to the full name of the charity.

For more information, contact the Division of Charitable Solicitations at (615) 741-2555.